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General Guidelines

The RHR style guide was implemented to streamline the copy editing process for each accepted academic article for the year. The collective editorial board’s goals regarding copyediting are to clarify the scope of each article, standardize formatting (particularly citations) throughout the journal, and adhere to academic standards.

Exceptions to this vision are considered on a case-by-case basis, such as regarding pronoun use or personal stylistic author choices.

Many of these guidelines were adopted from the American Studies Journal, the Chicago Style Manual, and the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), which has information on Chicago style. Citations of these sources are informally referred to using parenthetical citations, but are fairly straightforward to find using the source links on the last page of this guide.

Copy editors should use track changes and keep these accessible for the author. When in doubt, please consult the Chicago Style Manual for general historical formatting and copy editing conventions. The RHR defaults to these standards for any and all rules not explicitly outlined.

This guide was developed primarily by Ephraim Griffith in 2015-16 and reformatted by the 2017 Director of Copy Editing, Abigail Panitz. It has been updated and reformatted once again by the 2022 Directors of Copy Editing: Natty Askanase, Benji Wilton, and Sean Weeks. The majority of the changes to the original document were developed and approved by the Editorial Board.
Basic Conventions

1. Spelling and Word Choice
   a. Romanize words from foreign languages, and add the non-romanized text afterwards in parentheses.
      i. Pick a guide to follow for the entire article—here is a useful example for Japanese as provided by a highly reputable source, the Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/japanese.pdf
      ii. Use the same guide to romanize words from the same language across the journal (as an example, if we have multiple articles that use Chinese words ensure the guide used is the same for those articles).
   b. Follow American spelling conventions for romanization and English vs. American words (e.g. gray, not grey).
   c. Word choice in general should be scholarly. Define any technical or specialized academic jargon being used.

2. Capitalization
   a. When in doubt, don’t capitalize.
   b. Check Chicago Style or dictionary if CSJ does not show whether word/phrase is capitalized.
   c. Countries, cities, proper nouns are capitalized.
   d. Academic disciplines are not capitalized but course names are: history vs. History of Feminism.
   e. Titles of persons should be capitalized (Chairman Mao, General Eisenhower).
   f. Titles in apposition should be lowercase: (the British prime minister, Winston Churchill).
   g. Proper nouns can be tricky:
i. Capitalize “Rice University,” but refer to “the university.” Capitalize the “Freedom Charter,” but refer to “the charter.”

ii. The only exception to this rule is the US Constitution, which is always capitalized and referred to as “the Constitution.”

h. Chapters and their numbers should not be capitalized.
   i. “In chapter four,” not “In Chapter Four.”

3. Acronyms and Abbreviations
   a. Do not use an acronym without defining it first.
      i. “He joined the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) when he was twenty-five.”
      ii. Even abbreviations that seem obvious need to be defined, like the USSR.

b. Do not use periods for acronyms and abbreviations (NY, CEO, VP, UK, US).
   i. Exception to this rule for first names: W.E.B Du Bois, E.B. White.

c. Watch out for incorrect usage of e.g. and i.e.
   i. i.e. means “that is to say,” while e.g. means “for example.”

4. Dates
   a. Dates formatted using, month, day, year order—American style dating.
   b. Spell out centuries (nineteenth century, twentieth century).
   c. BCE is used instead of BC.
   d. Apostrophes
      i. Decades do not have an apostrophe (1980s not 1980’s).
      ii. Contractions are discouraged in scholarly writing.

5. Ellipses
   a. If the missing text is at the beginning of a quotation, use three dots and capitalize the first letter: “. . . There was a crotchety old Arabic professor.”
   b. If the missing text is in the middle of a quotation, use three dots: “Once upon a time . . . there was a crotchety old Arabic professor.”
c. If the missing text is at the end of a quotation, use four dots: “Once upon a time, there was a crotchety old Arabic professor . . . .”

d. If the missing text consists of the omission of one or more paragraphs, use four ellipsis points at the end of the paragraph preceding the omitted part. (If that paragraph ends with an incomplete sentence, only three points are used.) If the first part of a paragraph is omitted within a quotation, a paragraph indentation and three ellipsis points appear before the first quoted word.

i. This means that you can see up to 7 ellipsis points in a row in such situations.

6. Numbers

   a. In general, do not spell out numbers above ten.

   b. Spell out any number that starts a sentence.

   c. Write out fractions.

   d. Spell out chapter numbers (chapter nineteen)
Punctuation

7. Comma Usage
   a. One space after a comma.
   b. The Oxford comma is an *encouraged* stylistic tool.
   c. Can also use commas to set off items on a list, for paired descriptions (e.g. Houston, Texas), adding etc. or et al., using transitional adverbs, appositives.

8. Semicolon vs. Comma
   a. Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, so) take commas.
   b. A semicolon is needed to join independent clauses in a sentence.
   c. However, therefore, and indeed require semicolons whenever used to link clauses; can be used with a semicolon accompanied by a comma, but not with a comma alone.
   d. The phrase “not only... but also” requires a comma; Chicago Style Guide has other examples of phrases with more complex rules.

9. Quotes
   a. Gandhi stated, "Poverty is the worst form of violence."
   b. Gandhi stated that "poverty is the worst form of violence."
   c. Gandhi linked forms of oppression: "Poverty is the worst form of violence."
   d. These are the three major punctuation types used with quotations—others are frowned upon.
   e. Any emphasis added should be placed in the footnotes.

10. Colon and Semicolon
    a. One space after a semicolon.
    b. Colons and semicolons should appear outside quotation marks or parentheses unless they are part of the quoted material.
    c. Do not capitalize text after a semicolon.

11. Periods
    a. One space after a period.
b. “Within quotes, a period should precede the end quote unless it changes the meaning of the quote” (ASJ); i.e., periods should be placed inside a quotation if it ends a sentence, unless there is another form of end punctuation (like a question mark) already there.

12. Quotation Marks
   a. Double quotation marks (“ ”) are standard.
   b. For quotes within quotes, the internal citation uses single quotation marks (‘within the quote’); outside quote retains the original double quotation marks.
   c. Block quotes don’t use quotation marks; any quotes 5+ lines should be indented by 0.5 in.
      i. One blank line of spacing before/after each block quotation (Purdue Owl).

13. Em Dashes
   a. Use Em dashes in sentences where the author is setting off text.
      i. “Philip Khoury—the noted historian from Harvard—does not subscribe to post-structuralist thought.”
   b. Make sure they’re merged using Google Docs/Microsoft Word rather than two hyphens.
Document Formatting

1. Headings
   a. If used by the author, they should be descriptive rather than the basics (e.g. “Introduction,” “Conclusion).
   b. The following are acceptable heading formats:
      i. **Centered, Boldface or Italic Type, Headline-style Capitalization.**
      ii. Centered, Regular Type, Headline-style Capitalization.
      iii. **Flush Left, Boldface or Italic Type, Headline-style Capitalization.**
      iv. Flush left, roman type, sentence-style capitalization.
      v. **Run in at the beginning of paragraph (no blank line after), boldface or italic type, sentence-style capitalization, terminal period.**

2. Footnotes
   a. As of the 2018 RHR edition, the editorial board has decided to uniformly use footnotes rather than endnotes.
      i. Notes follow Chicago notes formatting.
      ii. For example:
         1. Contributors’ Names, “Title of Resource,” List the OWL as Publishing Organization/Web Site Name in Italics, last date source was edited. [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/13/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/13/).
   b. Footnotes should be placed after a period, and multiple citations should be separated by a semicolon.
   c. Generally, you should add footnotes for each sentence in which you use information from your source(s).

3. Non-Paragraph Document Elements
   a. For example, tables, figures, and graphs should be positioned after the paragraph that directly refers to the element using its concise label (e.g. in Table 1, the data suggests...).

4. Citations
a. Any arguments that are not the author’s own work must be directly quoted or paraphrased with a noted citation (endnote) corresponding to the source from which the information was found.
   i. If the author of the essay adds italics to the direct quote, they must indicate that with brackets after the quote (e.g. [emphasis mine]).
   ii. Any outdated/misspelled words/incorrect grammar should be indicated with [sic] within the quotes inserted directly after the phrase in question.

5. Formatting Paragraphs
   a. Spaces between paragraphs and after paragraphs should be deleted.

6. Bibliography
   a. Must include all sources consulted, not just cited; follows standard Chicago Academic formatting (see Manual of Style for in-depth guidelines).
   b. Bibliography is single-spaced; there should be two lines of white space between the “Bibliography” header and the first entry.
   c. Sources are listed alphabetically by the first word of the citation.
   d. List publisher names, cities, etc. in full without using abbreviations.
   e. Citations should be comprehensive and include as many required elements as possible (e.g. if no date available for a printed source, n.d. is substituted).
   f. For electronically-accessed sources, the URL is often used as an identifier; DOIs are also used to withstand URL changes; if this can be found, it should be cited in place of where the URL would be listed.
   g. For footnotes, a note for the second mention of the same source in a row need not contain all of the written-out source information; “[Author], Title, page number” suffices. **Ibid is no longer allowed.**
   h. The second note for a source previously cited, should be written as “[Author]. Page number.”
i. No separation of primary and secondary sources in bibliography is permitted.

**Additional Guidelines**

1. **Expressing Unclear Concepts**
   a. Spell out many words/concepts: i.e., “percent” rather than “%”
      i. This also applies to simple fractions (which should be hyphenated) and mathematical phrases, such as: “one-third” or “x plus y equals z.”
   b. The abbreviation “US” is an adjective. “United States” is a proper noun. It is proper to write “US hegemony” or “The United States made a mistake.” It is improper to write, “The US has been criticized.”
   c. Many abbreviations can be expressed in different ways—inconsistent or unfamiliar abbreviations should be checked against and if needed, replaced by the Chicago Style Manual’s list. (Yes, they have an extensive list of common and acceptable abbreviations).

2. **Hyphens**
   a. Hyphenate appropriately. “Art in the Nineteenth Century” is a nominal construction. “Nineteenth-Century Art” is an adjectival construction. Make sure that the construction being used fits correctly as a part of speech in the sentence in question.
   b. Certain words or phrases are often mis-hyphenated or mistakenly not hyphenated. Others change meaning, as in the previous point, depending on the presence of a hyphen.
   c. For example: mass produced, meaning making, neoconservative, neoliberal, multilayered, postmodern, noncommittal, reimagine, post-structuralist, socioeconomic, geopolitical, nondescript
   d. Hyphenations happen for descriptive phrases preceding the noun: a well-timed publication; the publication is well timed; a thought-provoking text.
Most of these may sound like convoluted or confusing rules, but they almost always correspond to what most already understand as the norm for a given phrase.

3. Symbols
   a. All currency symbols ($) are allowed in writing, but mathematical symbols and other units should be spelled out (ex. kilometers as opposed to km).

4. A Note on Two-Word Constructions
   a. “Policymaker” is a one-word construction. “Policy-making” is a hyphenated construction. “Decision maker” is a two-word construction. As a general rule, when in doubt, look it up in Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary or consult the Chicago Manual of Style.

5. Adjectival Use of Nations’ Names/Acronyms
   a. In certain focuses for historical fields, one should use the acronym for a nation strictly adjectivally and the fully spelled out name when the nation is being used as a noun.
   b. Because many other nations do not adhere to this rule, it will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
Strategies for Copy Editing

1. Line Editing

   a. For any stylistic changes, make sure you have developed an argument before line editing in a change (i.e. for awkward phrasing, have a concise reason for why it is awkward).

   b. If a word or phrase is unfamiliar, assume it is the copyeditor’s lack of knowledge. Query yourself before querying the writer!

      i. We are checking someone else’s work, but be sure to check your own work when doing so.

      ii. Assume good faith on the author’s part.

   c. For individual author quirks, have a conversation with the author in regards to changes. Keep in mind that these conversations need to be resolved somewhat quickly as the printing schedule cannot be changed.

      i. For example, you may feel it is necessary to ask someone who overuses parentheses (or semicolons, or em dashes) to use fewer.

2. Tone

   a. It is up to the copyeditor to pick up on and edit accordingly for inconcise language. This includes language use that interferes with the substance of the paper, such as passive voice, awkward phrasing, and, most importantly, objective grammar errors. Any subjective or controversial choices should be made in consultation with the Director of Copy Editing. If you’re unsure about a change, it is better to use the “comment” tool instead of directly editing it.

   b. Avoid maximizers, i.e. unnecessary double adverbs/adjectives like “very happy” or redundant/unnecessary phrasing, such as “obviously apparent.”
Sources

Links:
Chicago Manual of Style: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html
Purdue OWL: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/2/